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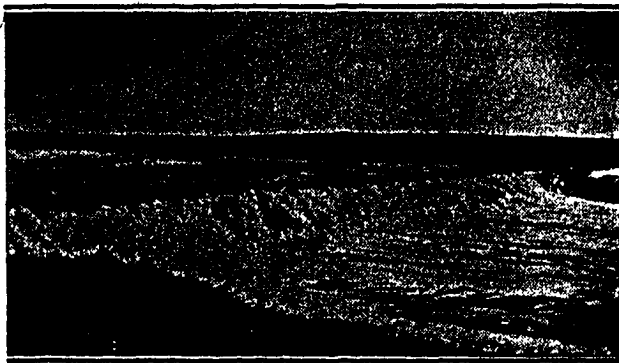
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# East Central Irrigation Association

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Nature Planned It--More Irrigation  
for the Money Than Any Other  
Project on Earth

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## IRRIGATION AND POWER ARE THE ANSWERS

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In spite of the warning contained in the Palliser report, made in 1859 when he outlined the territory known as the Palliser Triangle, as being a semi-arid and drought area, settlement was permitted from the Red Deer River north to the apex of the triangle, in the Province of Alberta. Homesteading got under way in the spring of 1909. Settlement covered the whole area by the year 1912. Millions of dollars were spent in developing farms, followed by the completion of the railroads, the building of towns, villages and hamlets, at which time, we had a settlement of one family in the area per half section. A period of prosperity was enjoyed until the drought years developed.

VARIOUS schemes were fostered to assist the settlers by means of Government relief, seed, feed and ultimately direct relief to the settlers. Despite the support of Government agencies and the years of effort and toil of the people drought forced the depopulation to the point where approximately 80 per cent of the land reverted to the Government and is now controlled by the Special Areas Board.

DURING this period various irrigation proposals were fostered by the people of the territory lead by William Pearce, the outstanding irrigation engineer of that decade. Many surveys were completed by the Dominion Government from 1920 until the present time. The most recent survey has been done under the supervision of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act, culminating in the scheme supported by this Association known as:

### THE RED DEER RIVER DIVERSION

**LOCATION:**—The project involves the construction of a dam on the Red Deer River approximately 40 miles east of the city of Red Deer, Alberta, and a large canal (PURELY BY GRAVITY) to Hamilton Lake (ELEVATION 2528 FEET—INITIAL STORAGE CAPACITY OF 315,000 ACRE FEET) also Kirkpatrick Lake both just south of the town of Coronation, Alberta. From these lakes water will be carried, first through natural channels, then as the scheme develops through canals to the drought areas of East Central Alberta.

**ESTIMATED INITIAL COST:**—including dam, main canal and storage \$6,750,000.00.

**ESTIMATED LABOUR REQUIREMENTS:**—The actual construction of the works will employ 1500 men steadily for 18 months. This does not include the indirect labour required in the preparation of materials, cement, labour, equipment and miscellaneous supplies, nor that required in servicing these men and their families during the work of construction; A REALLY WORTHWHILE POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION UNDERTAKING.

### NATURE AND BENEFITS OF PROJECT

(a) It will provide settlement, permanent homes and means of livelihood for 7500 families in a section of West-

ern Canada from which over 70 per cent of the original rural settlers were forced by drought to abandon their farm lands, it will rehabilitate an area now largely depopulated; the area can be made to support at least 30,000 more people.

(b) It will provide irrigation for a large area of land suitable for irrigation. The P.F.R.A. engineers have already checked and appraised 275,000 acres as suitable, and survey of other areas is being continued. It is expected that 500,000 acres may be ultimately developed. A large acreage of this land is abandoned cultivation, due to lack of rainfall there has been very meagre recovery of grass growth and it is useful only for very limited grazing. A program of regrassing this old cultivation has been under way for some years with varying results.

(c) It will give constant flow to approximately 1200 miles of dry creek channels traversing an area containing five (5) million acres of range land, and will materially increase the livestock carrying capacity of these lands, and will give a constant supply of water to all existing dams, railway and others, as well as dams to be constructed along the various water courses.

(d) It will rehabilitate 34 urban communities now largely depopulated from the years of drought.

(e) It will make possible the future development of an immense hydro electric power project, by providing the works around which such project may be built. The dam on the Red Deer River will store water to a height of approximately 150 feet. From this dam water may be diverted into Buffalo Lake for storage for river control and power. Approximately one and a half million acre-feet may be stored in the lake and fed back into the Red Deer River. To provide this volume of water, it would be necessary to divert other streams into the Red Deer near its source. This will insure not only a constant supply of summer and winter water but also a continuous supply of summer and winter electric power. The power development will be one of the largest and most attractive in Western Canada.

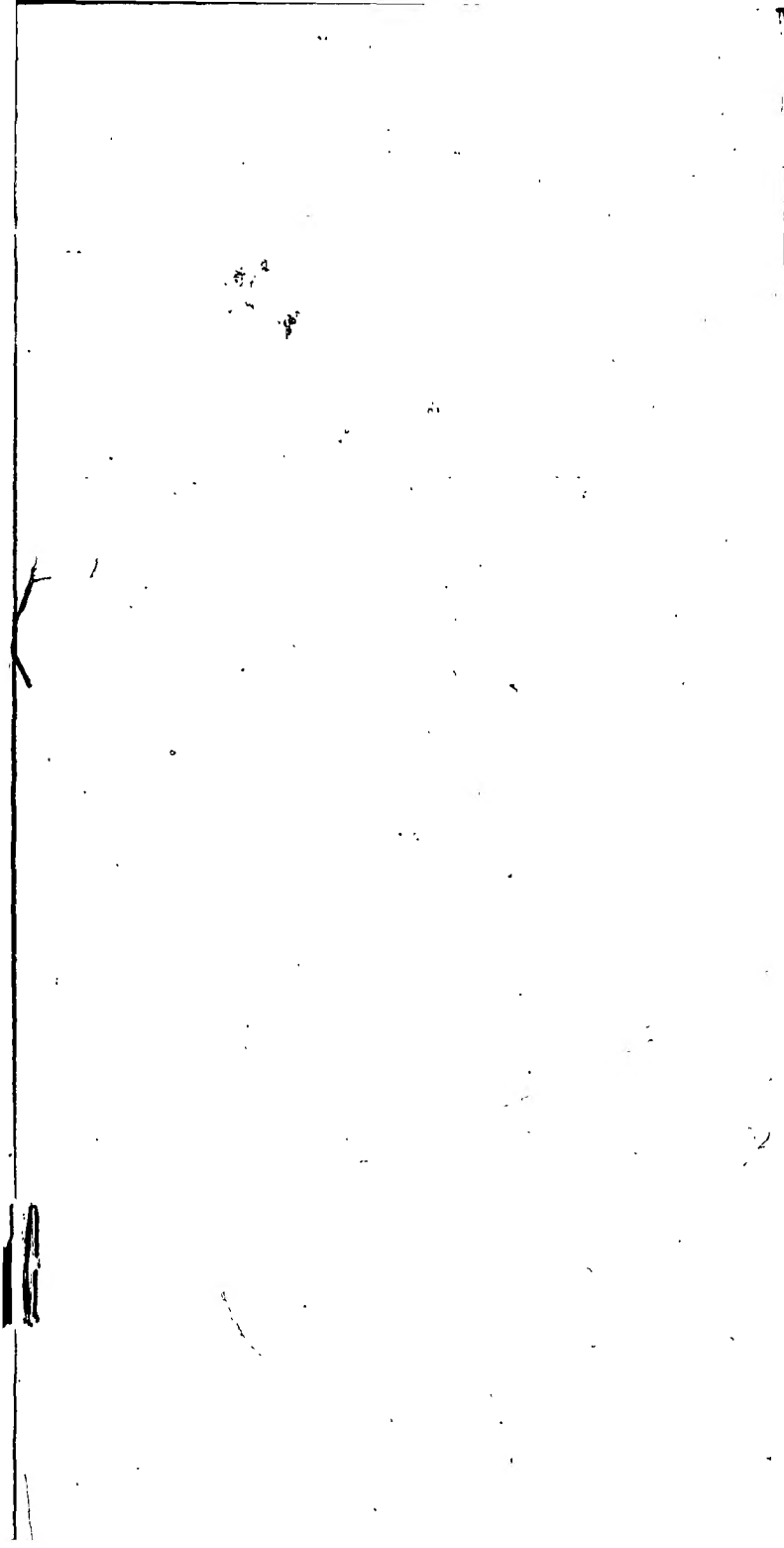
Buffalo Lake will, in so far as its present proposed use is concerned, be raised to normal level and used as storage to feed water back into the Red Deer by controlled flow to protect users of water below the dam on the river.

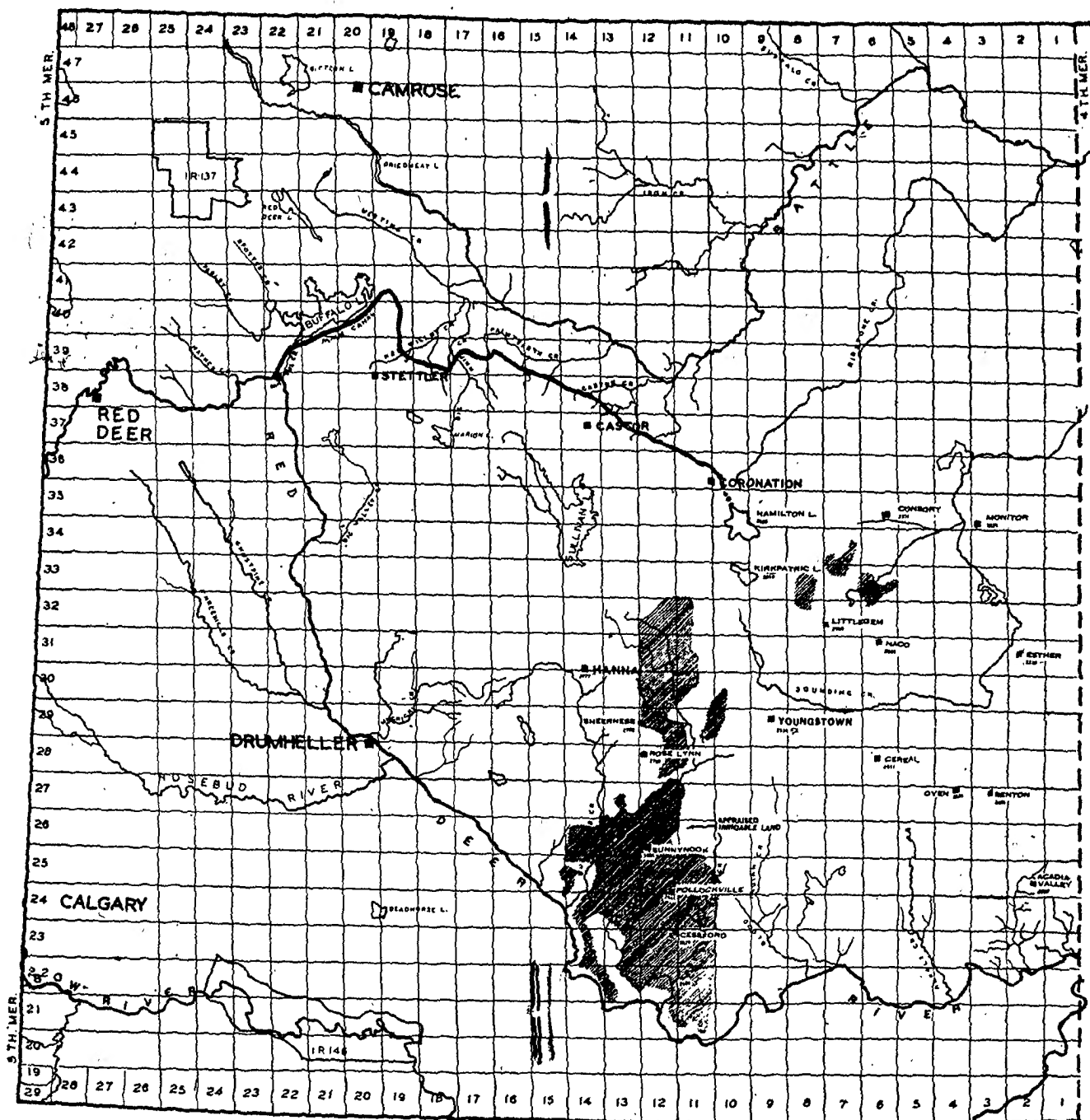
## RESULTS

1. Livestock raising when assured permanence of summer water and winter feed will readily increase the present carrying capacity of 4 head per quarter section to at least 10 head per quarter section on the dry lands.

2. The soil surveys completed definitely show the soil and climatic conditions are suitable for the growing of FORAGE CROPS, ALFALFA, SUGAR BEETS, CANNING CROPS and FRUITS.

3. From a standpoint of transportation, a very important factor, the whole area is now completely served by the railway facilities of both our great transcontinental systems, The Canadian National Railway and The Canadian Pacific Railway. Both railways will materially benefit by the development of this scheme. In the area there are now three main highways, east and west, north and





Shaded portion shown above marked "appraised irrigatable land" shows the 275,000 acres already checked and appraised by the P.F.R.A. engineers, as suitable for irrigation. Hamilton Lake elevation is 2528 feet. The following points are below this elevation: Consort 2371 ft., Monitor 2220 ft., Little Gem 2500 ft., Naco 2503 ft., Esther 2238 ft., Cereal 2511 ft., Oyen 2521 ft., Benton 2406 ft., Alask 2302 ft., Acadia Valley 2339 ft., Scottfield 2498 ft., Compeer 2366 ft., Kirriemuir 2384 ft., Youngstown (North) Daraley 2514 ft., Surveys are being continued in these areas.



south, with market roads built through the years by local authorities.

4. The territory has now established in it six up to date Hospitals, as well as schools, churches, a Judicial centre and all the advantages of old settled communities.

5. In addition to the above purely material developments, the re-establishing of Buffalo Lake as a permanent summer resort and beauty spot, together with other lakes and streams rehabilitated, will give to the whole area many needed recreational centres.

### LOOKING AHEAD

A questionnaire circulated among the members of the armed services of Canada has revealed that many thousands are desirous of returning to agriculture after the War. Land must be provided for these men upon which they will have a reasonable chance of being self-supporting and establishing homes. An economic survey made in 1939 has shown that only 56 farms on present irrigated lands were available for settlers at that time. The only alternative is to place the new settlers on bush farms far from existing railway and social services or else to open up new irrigated areas within the territory now served by such services.

Irrigation leads to improved farming conditions removing the uncertainty which goes with dry farming. Farmers who are still actively engaged in farming operations, in the areas affected can look forward to a better future and their sons and the sons of others returning from the conflict in Europe can find in agriculture a sense of security and confidence that their general living conditions and home life will at least be equally attractive with that of the urban dweller.



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